

School buses .....	\$10.50
Elementary and secondary schools .....	9.97
Local and suburban transportation .....	9.49
Child daycare services .....	8.12
Individual and family services .....	7.84

The benefits busdrivers receive from their employers vary greatly. Most intercity and local transit busdrivers receive paid health and life insurance, sick leave, and free bus rides on any of the regular routes of their line or system. Drivers who work full time also get as much as 4 weeks of vacation annually. Most local transit busdrivers are also covered by dental insurance and pension plans. School busdrivers receive sick leave, and many are covered by health and life insurance and pension plans. Because they generally do not work when school is not in session, they do not get vacation leave. In a number of States, local transit and school busdrivers employed by local governments are covered by a statewide public employee pension system. Increasingly, school systems extend benefits to drivers who supplement their driving by working in the school system during off hours.

Most intercity and many local transit busdrivers are members of the Amalgamated Transit Union. Local transit busdrivers in New York and several other large cities belong to the Transport Workers Union of America. Some drivers belong to the United Transportation Union and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

### Related Occupations

Other workers who drive vehicles on highways and city streets are ambulance drivers and attendants, except emergency medical technicians; taxi drivers and chauffeurs; and truckdrivers and driver/sales workers.

### Sources of Additional Information

For information on employment opportunities, contact local transit systems, intercity bus lines, school systems, or the local offices of the State employment service.

General information on busdriving is available from:

➤ American Bus Association, 1100 New York Ave. NW., Suite 1050, Washington, DC 20005. Internet: <http://www.buses.org>

General information on school bus driving is available from:

➤ National School Transportation Association, 625 Slaters Lane, Suite 205, Alexandria, VA 22314.

➤ School Bus Fleet, 21061 S. Western Ave., Torrance, CA 90501.

General information on local transit busdriving is available from:

➤ American Public Transportation Association, 1666 K St. NW., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006. Internet: <http://www.apta.com>

General information on motorcoach driving is available from:

➤ United Motorcoach Association, 113 S. West St., 4th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22314. Telephone (tollfree): 800-424-8262.

## Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs

(O\*NET 53-3041.00)

### Significant Points

- Taxi drivers and chauffeurs can work all schedules, including full-time, part-time, night, evening, and weekend work.
- Job opportunities will be good because replacement needs are high—many people work in these jobs for short periods.
- Many taxi drivers and chauffeurs like the independent, unsupervised work of driving their automobile.

### Nature of the Work

Anyone who has been in a large city knows the importance of taxi and limousine service. *Taxi drivers*, also known as *cab drivers*, help passengers get to and from their homes, workplaces, and recreational pursuits such as dining, entertainment, and shopping. They also help out-of-town business people and tourists get around in new surroundings.

At the start of their driving shift, taxi drivers usually report to a taxicab service or garage where they are assigned a vehicle, most frequently a large, conventional automobile modified for commercial passenger transport. They record their name, work date, and cab identification number on a trip sheet. Drivers check the cab's fuel and oil levels, and make sure the lights, brakes, and windshield wipers are in good working order. Drivers adjust rear and side mirrors and their seat for comfort. Any equipment or part not in good working order is reported to the dispatcher or company mechanic.

Taxi drivers pick up passengers in one of three ways: cruising the streets to pick up random passengers; prearranged pickups; and pickups from taxi stands established in highly trafficked areas. In urban areas, the majority of passengers hail or "wave down" drivers cruising the streets. Customers may also prearrange a pickup by calling a cab company and giving a location, approximate pick up time, and destination. The cab company dispatcher then relays the information to a driver by two-way radio, cellular telephone, or on-board computer. Outside of urban areas, the majority of trips are dispatched in this manner. Drivers also pick up passengers waiting at cabstands or in taxi lines at airports, train stations, hotels, and other places where people frequently seek taxis.

Some drivers transport individuals with special needs, such as those with disabilities and the elderly. These drivers, also known as *paratransit drivers*, operate specially equipped vehicles designed to accommodate a variety of needs in nonemergency situations. Although special certification is not necessary, some additional training on the equipment and passenger needs may be required.

Drivers should be familiar with streets in the areas they serve so they can use the most efficient route to destinations. They should know the locations of frequently requested destinations, such as airports, bus and railroad terminals, convention centers, hotels, and other points of interest. In case of emergency, the driver should also know the location of fire and police stations and hospitals.

Upon reaching the destination, drivers determine the fare and announce it to the rider. Fares often consist of many parts. In many cabs, a taximeter measures the fare based on the length of the trip and the amount of time the trip took. Drivers turn the taximeter on when passengers enter the cab and turn it off when they reach the final destination. The fare also may include a surcharge for additional passengers, a fee for handling luggage, or a drop charge—an additional flat fee added for use of the cab. In some cases, fares are determined by a system of zones through which the taxi passes during a trip. Each jurisdiction determines the rate and structure of the fare system covering licensed taxis. Passengers generally add a tip or gratuity to the fare. The amount of the gratuity depends on the passengers' satisfaction with the quality and efficiency of the ride and courtesy of the driver. Drivers issue receipts upon request from the passenger. They enter onto the trip sheet all information regarding the trip, including the place and time of pick-up and drop-off and the total fee. These logs help check the driver's activity and efficiency. Drivers also must fill out accident reports when necessary.

*Chauffeurs* operate limousines, vans, and private cars for limousine companies, private businesses, government agencies, and wealthy individuals. This service differs from taxi service in that all trips are prearranged. Many chauffeurs transport customers in



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large vans between hotels and airports, bus, or train terminals. Others drive luxury automobiles, such as limousines, to business events, entertainment venues, and social events. Still others provide full-time personal transportation for wealthy families and private companies.

At the start of the workday, chauffeurs ready their automobiles or vans for use. They inspect the vehicle for cleanliness and, when needed, vacuum the interior and wash the exterior body, windows, and mirrors. They check fuel and oil levels and make sure the lights, tires, brakes, and windshield wipers work. Chauffeurs may perform routine maintenance and make minor repairs, such as changing tires or adding oil and other fluids when needed. If a vehicle requires more complicated repair, they take it to a professional mechanic.

Chauffeurs cater to passengers with attentive customer service and a special regard for detail. They help riders into the car by holding open doors, holding umbrellas when raining, and loading packages and luggage into the trunk of the car. They may perform errands for their employers such as delivering packages or picking up clients arriving at airports. Many chauffeurs offer conveniences and luxuries in their limousines to insure a pleasurable ride, such as newspapers, magazines, music, drinks, televisions, and telephones. A growing number of chauffeurs work as full-service executive assistants, simultaneously acting as driver, secretary, and itinerary-planner.

### **Working Conditions**

Taxi drivers and chauffeurs occasionally have to load and unload heavy luggage and packages. Driving for long periods can be tiring and uncomfortable, especially in densely populated urban areas. Drivers must be alert to conditions on the road, especially in heavy and congested traffic or in bad weather. They must take precautions to prevent accidents and avoid sudden stops, turns, and other driving maneuvers that would jar passengers. Taxi drivers also risk robbery because they work alone and often carry large amounts of cash.

Work hours of taxi drivers and chauffeurs vary greatly. Some jobs offer full-time or part-time employment with work hours that can change from day to day or remain the same every day. It is often necessary for drivers to report to work on short notice. Chauffeurs who work for a single employer may be on call much of the time. Evening and weekend work are common for limousine and taxicab services.

The needs of the client or employer dictate the work schedule for chauffeurs. The work of taxi drivers is much less structured. Working free from supervision, they may break for a meal or a rest whenever their vehicle is unoccupied. This occupation is attractive to individuals seeking flexible work schedules, such as college and postgraduate students. Similarly, other service workers such as ambulance drivers and police officers often consider moonlighting as taxi drivers and chauffeurs.

Full-time taxi drivers usually work one shift a day, which may last from 8 to 12 hours. Part-time drivers may work half a shift each day, or work a full shift once or twice a week. Drivers may work shifts at all times of the day and night, because most taxi companies offer services 24 hours a day. Early morning and late night shifts are common. Drivers work long hours during holidays, weekends, and other special events that support heavier demand for their services. Independent drivers, however, often set their own hours and schedules.

Design improvements in newer cabs have reduced stress and increased the comfort and efficiency of drivers. Many regulators require standard amenities such as air conditioning and general upkeep of the vehicles. Modern taxicabs also are sometimes equipped with sophisticated tracking devices, fare meters, and dispatching equipment. Satellites and tracking systems link many of these state-of-the-art vehicles with company headquarters. In a matter of seconds, dispatchers can deliver directions, traffic advisories, weather reports, and other important communications to drivers anywhere in the transporting area. The satellite link-up also allows dispatchers to track vehicle location, fuel consumption, and engine performance. Drivers can easily communicate with dispatchers to discuss delivery schedules and courses of action should there be mechanical problems. For instance, automated dispatch systems help dispatchers locate the closest driver to a customer in order to maximize efficiency and quality of service. When threatened with crime or violence, drivers may have special "trouble lights" to alert authorities of emergencies and guarantee that help arrives quickly.

Taxi drivers and chauffeurs meet many different types of people. Dealing with rude customers and waiting for passengers requires patience. Many municipalities and taxicab and chauffeur companies require taxi drivers to wear clean and neat clothes. Many chauffeurs wear formal attire such as a tuxedo, a coat and tie, a dress, or a uniform and cap.

### **Employment**

Taxi drivers and chauffeurs held about 176,000 jobs in 2000. Almost one-third worked for local and suburban passenger transportation and taxicab companies. Others worked for service oriented companies such as automotive dealers, automotive rental agencies, hotels, healthcare facilities, and social services agencies. About 27 percent were self-employed.

### **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**

Local governments set license standards and requirements for taxi drivers and chauffeurs that include minimum qualifications for driving experience and training. Many taxi and limousine companies set higher standards than required by law. It is common for companies to review applicants' medical, credit, criminal, and driving records. In addition, many companies require a higher minimum age and prefer that drivers be high school graduates.

Persons interested in driving a limousine or taxicab must first have a regular automobile driver's license. They also must acquire a chauffeur or taxi driver's license, commonly called a "hack" license. Local authorities generally require applicants for a hack license to pass a written exam or complete a training program that

may include up to 80 hours of classroom instruction. To qualify through either an exam or a training program, applicants must know local geography, motor vehicle laws, safe driving practices, regulations governing taxicabs, and display some aptitude for customer service. Many training programs include a test on English proficiency, usually in the form of listening comprehension; applicants who do not pass the English exam must take an English course along with the formal driving program. In addition, some classroom instruction includes route management, map reading, and service for passengers with disabilities. Many taxicab or limousine companies sponsor applicants and give them a temporary permit that allows them to drive, although they may not yet have finished the training program or passed the test. However, some jurisdictions, such as New York City, have discontinued this practice and now require driver applicants to complete the licensing process before operating a taxi or limousine.

Some taxi and limousine companies give new drivers on-the-job training. They show drivers how to operate the taximeter and communications equipment, and how to complete paperwork. Other topics covered may include driver safety and popular sightseeing and entertainment destinations. Many companies have contracts with social service agencies and transportation services to transport elderly and disabled citizens in non-emergency situations. To support these services, new drivers may get special training on how to handle wheelchair lifts and other mechanical devices.

Taxi drivers and chauffeurs should be able to get along with many different types of people. They must be patient when waiting for passengers or when dealing with rude customers. It is also helpful for drivers to be tolerant and have even tempers when driving in heavy and congested traffic. Drivers should be dependable because passengers rely on them to be picked up at a prearranged time and taken to the correct destination. To be successful, drivers must be responsible and self-motivated because they work with little supervision. Increasingly, companies encourage drivers to develop their own loyal customer base to improve their businesses.

The majority of taxi drivers and chauffeurs are called "lease drivers." Lease drivers pay a daily, weekly, or monthly fee to the company allowing them to lease their vehicle. In the case of limousines, leasing also allows the driver access to the company's dispatch system. The fee may also include a charge for vehicle maintenance, insurance, and a deposit on the vehicle. Lease drivers may take their cars home with them when they are not on duty.

Opportunities for advancement are limited for taxi drivers and chauffeurs. Experienced drivers may obtain preferred routes or shifts. Some advance to dispatcher or manager jobs; others may start their own limousine company. On the other hand, many drivers like the independent, unsupervised work of driving their automobile.

In small and medium-size communities, drivers are sometimes able to buy their taxi, limousine, or other type of automobile and go into business for themselves. These independent owner-drivers require an additional permit allowing them to operate their vehicle as a company. Some big cities limit the number of operating permits. In these cities, drivers become owner-drivers by buying permits from owner-drivers who leave the business. Although many owner-drivers are successful, some fail to cover expenses and eventually lose their permit and automobile. Good business sense and courses in accounting, business, and business arithmetic can help an owner-driver become successful. Knowledge of mechanics enables owner-drivers to perform routine maintenance and minor repairs to cut expenses.

### Job Outlook

Persons seeking jobs as taxi drivers and chauffeurs should encounter good opportunities. Many job openings will occur each year as

drivers transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. However, opportunities for drivers vary greatly in terms of earnings, work hours, and working conditions, depending on economic and regulatory conditions. Opportunities should be best for persons with good driving records and the ability to work flexible schedules.

Employment of taxi drivers and chauffeurs is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2010, as local and suburban travel increases with population growth. Employment growth will also stem from Federal legislation requiring increased services for persons with disabilities. Opportunities should be best in rapidly growing metropolitan areas.

Job opportunities can fluctuate from season to season and from month to month. Extra drivers may be hired during holiday seasons and peak travel and tourist times. During economic slowdowns, drivers are seldom laid off but they may have to increase their working hours, and earnings may decline somewhat. In economic upturns, job openings are numerous as drivers leave the occupation for other opportunities.

### Earnings

Earnings of taxi drivers and chauffeurs vary greatly, depending on the number of hours worked, customers' tips, and other factors. Median hourly earnings of salaried taxi drivers and chauffeurs, including tips, were \$8.19 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$6.68 and \$10.46 an hour. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$5.86, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$13.47 an hour. Median hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of taxi drivers and chauffeurs in 2000 were as follows:

Local and suburban transportation .....	\$8.58
Taxicabs .....	8.34
Automotive rentals, no drivers .....	7.93
Hotels and motels .....	7.51
Personnel supply services .....	6.63

According to limited information available, the majority of self-employed taxi owner-drivers earned from about \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually, including tips. However, professional drivers with a regular clientele often earn more. Many chauffeurs who worked full time earned from about \$25,000 to \$50,000, including tips. Earnings were generally higher in urban areas.

### Related Occupations

Other workers who have similar jobs include ambulance drivers, except emergency medical technicians; busdrivers; and truckdrivers and driver/sales workers.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information on licensing and registration of taxi drivers and chauffeurs is available from offices of local governments regulating taxicabs. For information about work opportunities as a taxi driver or chauffeur, contact local taxi or limousine companies or State employment service offices.

For general information about the work of taxi drivers and the taxi industry, contact:

► Taxi, Limousine, and Paratransit Association, 3849 Farragut Ave., Kensington, MD 20895.

For general information about the work of limousine drivers, contact:

► National Limousine Association, 2365 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite A325, Lexington, KY 40504. Telephone (tollfree): 800-652-7007.